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SUBJECT: CZECH VIEWS ON THE EU REFORM TREATY AND BRUSSELS SUMMIT

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The Czechs are content with the results of the June EU Summit, and do not expect any surprises during the coming intergovernmental conference. While the leadership of the current government continues to have reservations about the pace and scope of EU integration, they are not likely to play the role of spoiler in the near term. The Czechs are proud of what they see as a useful role they played at the June Summit both in supporting the Poles and in helping to bring about the eventual compromise. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Emboffs met recently with Michal Sedlacek in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for EU Affairs to discuss Czech views on the June 21 - 23 European Summit, including the role the Czechs played behind the scenes. On the latter point, Sedlacek confirmed that the Czech Republic was involved with the main compromise, postponing changes to the Council of the European Union voting system, both before and during the Summit. PM Topolanek met with Chancellor Merkel before the Summit to discuss reservations about the proposed double majority voting system and to establish dialogue surrounding the issue. Towards the end of the Summit, at a working meeting attended by Deputy PM Vondra, the Czechs, together with the Lithuanians, announced that they were supporting the Poles in their opposition to the German text on voting. It was after this, according to Sedlacek, that the Germans realized they would need to compromise and proposed the delay in the new voting system that the Poles eventually accepted.

¶3. (SBU) Sedlacek indicated that the Czechs are largely satisfied with the results of the Summit and the mandate provided to the IGC. The shift from a "Constitution" to a "reform treaty" is an important one for the Czechs and particularly the ruling ODS party. Under the new voting system, the Czech voting share would drop from 3.5% to 2.1%, but this has not been a concern. One potential problem is the Charter of Fundamental Rights: if this were to become part of the final reform treaty, Sedlacek predicted the Czechs would follow the U.K. in seeking an opt-out.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: The ODS appears to have become more pragmatic in their approach to the EU. While ODS founder and Honorary Chairman President Klaus remains the most visible EU critic in the Czech Republic, the party as a whole supports the EU. We expect Klaus to continue to voice his skepticism towards the EU, including the IGC process, especially since this could win him some support in advance of his likely re-election early next year. However, we expect that the ODS-led government, which includes the staunchly pro-EU Greens, will support the ICG, so long as no attempts are made to undo compromises reached at the June Summit.

GRABER